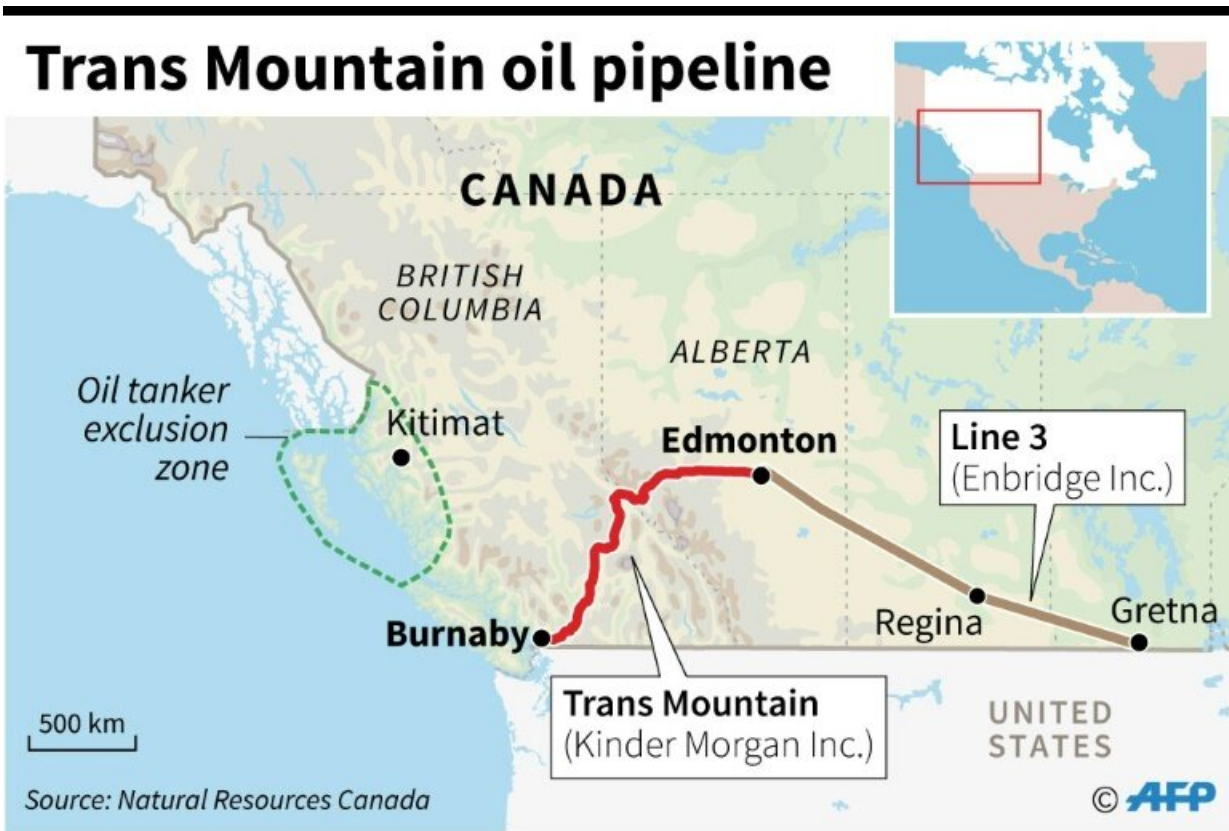


Canada energy regulator gives nod to Pacific pipeline

February 23 2019



Map of Canada showing the controversial Trans Mountain oil pipeline

Canada's energy regulator renewed its support on Friday for a controversial oil pipeline to the Pacific, saying the risks to endangered whales from increased tanker traffic were "justified."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government ordered a review of the Trans Mountain Project taking into account its impact on [killer whales](#) after the Federal Court of Appeal blocked it over concerns for the marine mammals.

The National Energy Board (NEB) said the project would have "significant adverse environmental effects" on the whales and an oil spill could have equally horrendous impacts on the [marine environment](#).

But it concluded "that they can be justified in the circumstances, in light of the considerable benefits of the project and measures to mitigate the effects."

The [federal government](#) has 90 days to decide whether to give final approval for the project, but has signaled it may delay until after a general election in October.

The expansion of the 715-mile (1,150-kilometer) pipeline was to move 890,000 barrels of oil a day from landlocked Alberta province to the Pacific coast, replacing a smaller crumbling conduit built in 1953.

The Trudeau administration approved the project in 2016 after an initial environmental review, saying it was in the "national interest" to ease Canada's reliance on the US market and get a better price for its crude oil.



The pipeline has faced opposition from environmentalists and indigenous tribes (protest pictured March 2018) worried that increased shipping from a marine terminal in Vancouver would impede the recovery of the local killer whale population

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Ottawa bought the project for Can\$4.5 billion (US\$3.5 billion) in August, effectively nationalizing it in a bid to bring a swift end to legal challenges and protests at construction sites.

But on the same day, the Federal Court of Appeal ordered ministers to

take a second look at the project, taking greater care to consult with indigenous tribes and consider marine traffic impacts.

Opponents of the pipeline said Friday the NEB recommendations do not satisfy their concerns, and vowed to continue their fight against it.

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Citation: Canada energy regulator gives nod to Pacific pipeline (2019, February 23) retrieved 6 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-02-canada-energy-pacific-pipeline.html>

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